

GPAC Meeting #7 Summary

September 21, 2021



Introduction

On September 21, 2021, the City of Ventura General Plan Update team convened the 7th meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The session was held jointly as an “educational forum” and focused on health and environmental justice. The primary meeting objectives were to provide:

- Context and background on health, equity, and environmental justice
- A comprehensive summary of existing conditions in the City
- An overview of best practices from other jurisdictions

The meeting was open to the public and live-streamed to YouTube. This document summarizes the key content presented and themes discussed at the meeting.

Meeting Participants

The following participants attended the meeting:

General Plan Team

- Matt Raimi, Raimi + Associates
- Simran Malhotra, Raimi + Associates
- Juan Reynoso, Raimi + Associates
- Lilly Nie, Raimi + Associates
- Peter Gilli, City of Ventura
- Neda Zayer, City of Ventura

GPAC Members

- Lorrie Brown, GPAC Chair
- Doug Halter, GPAC Vice Chair
- Philip Bohan, GPAC
- Nicholas Bonge, GPAC
- Stephanie Caldwell, GPAC
- Kyler Carlson, GPAC
- Scott McCarty, GPAC
- Joshua Damigo, GPAC
- Peter Freeman, GPAC
- Kacie Goff, GPAC
- Kelsey Jonker, GPAC
- Stephanie Karba, GPAC
- Bill McReynolds, GPAC
- Louise Lampara, GPAC
- Daniel Reardon, GPAC
- Alejandra Tellez, GPAC
- Abagale Thomas, GPAC
- Dana Worsnop, GPAC

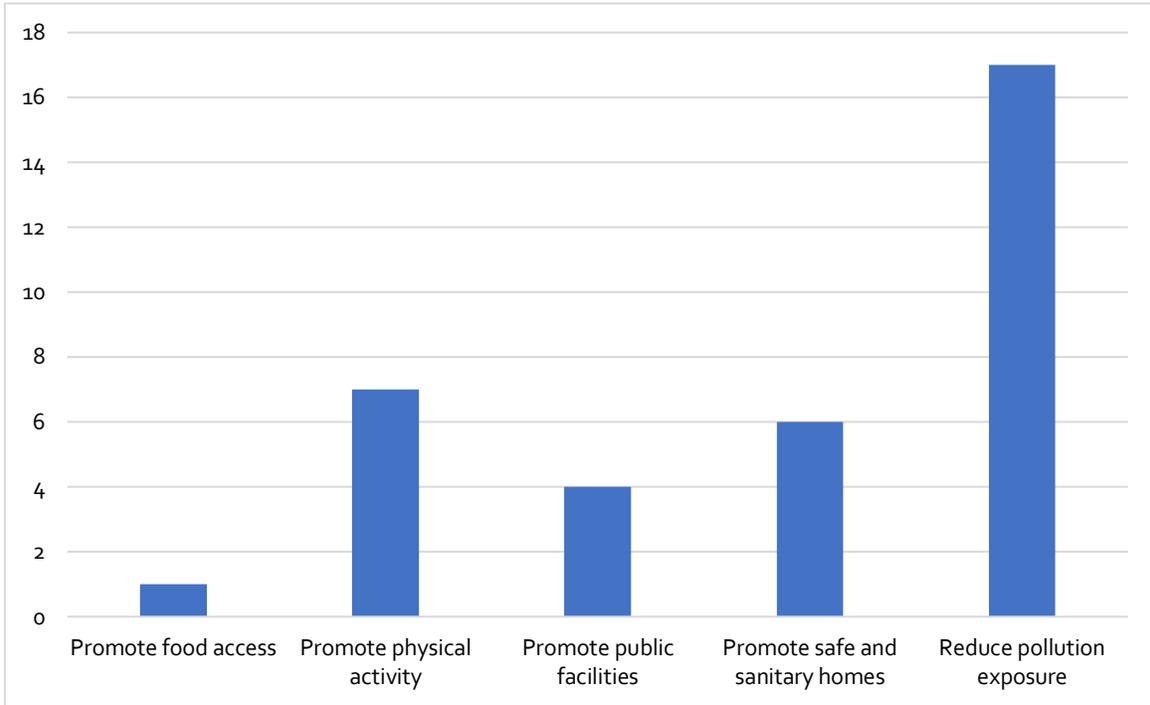


Figure 2: Poll results - which of the Senate Bill 1000 topic areas do you feel is the most important issue for the City of Ventura?

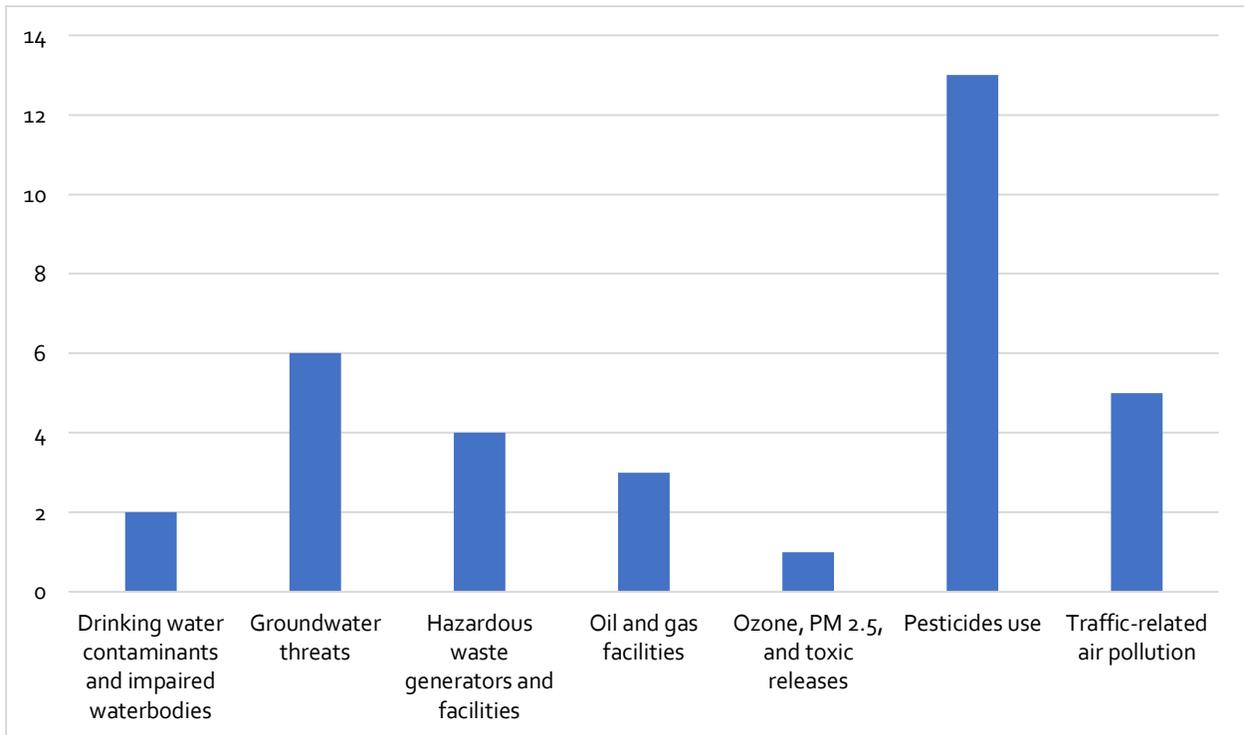


Figure 3: Poll results - while all topics will be covered in the General Plan, which of the following potential pollution exposure indicators do you feel is the most important issue for the City of Ventura?

Discussion Session

At the conclusion of the presentation, the General Plan team facilitated a discussion on health and environmental justice. The following are some of the key takeaways from this discussion:

Need for Data Verification

The state-level data used for the Health and Environmental Justice existing conditions report, such as the California Environmental Health Screening Tool or the California Environmental Health Tracking Program, ultimately needs to be verified by the community and requires ground-truthing. In the coming months, the next step in the General Plan Update process is to hear input from the community, confirm that their lived experiences match with the state-level data, and ensure that no areas of concern are missing. During the discussion session, some GPAC and community members noted that traffic, hazardous waste, and healthy food access data in certain parts of the City may not be correct and should be verified during later stages of the process.

Concern about Farming and Pesticide Exposure

Many GPAC and members of the public were concerned about pesticide exposure from agricultural activities within and adjacent to Ventura. Members commented that the SOAR lands surrounded by city development impact health, while also providing a visual amenity. Other comments on this topic were to work with Ventura County Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee to better understand how to address pesticide use, promote and encourage sustainable agriculture (without pesticides), and explore working with the County on policies related to agricultural lands.

Concern about Proximity of Industrial and Residential Uses

Multiple residents commented on the health issues related to industrial uses, including oil extraction. Comments made by participants included:

- Exploring changes in zoning to phase out noxious industrial uses
- Requiring inspections and monitoring of industrial properties
- Requiring that owners clean industrial parcels when they leave
- Terminating uses that are noxious or generally dangerous to the public
- Pursuing civil damages when public welfare is harmed

Inter-Jurisdictional Challenges

Many agricultural areas, such as those identified in SOAR areas, are outside of City jurisdiction but still have adverse impacts on residents within the City. The GPU team will continue to explore how the City can address impacts that are happening from activities going on within the County. In addition, there are jurisdictional challenges related to the SoCal compressor, as the City does not have control over the decision.

Gaps in Engagement and Outreach

Several GPAC and community members identified population groups that should be further engaged, most notably the farmworker population and areas with poor internet and broadband access. The GPU team acknowledged that an online forum is not the best medium to garner broad community understanding. The GPU Team will conduct more focused engagement work to reach people and community organizations that are not traditionally represented at GPAC meetings. This may include focus groups, walking tours, and one-on-one conversations.

Geographic Areas of Concern

Outside of the Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) identified by the existing conditions report, Montalvo, Saticoy, Ventura Avenue, the riverbed, and access points to the beach were some of the areas of the City where GPAC and community members noted additional issues with environmental justice and inadequate infrastructure.

Integration with Other General Plan Topics

Several questions were asked about the relationship between environmental justice and other topics such as economic development, job access, income, and education. There are clear connections between these topics and health outcomes. All General Plan elements will have an “equity and health” lens to further enhance the inter-relationships between topics.

Additional Topics/Ideas Mentioned

The GPAC and public raised a number of additional comments during the meeting, including:

- Concern about trash in the rivers
- Address ADA and accessibility issues; this is a health-related topic
- Improve the tree canopy throughout the city to enhance walkability, attractiveness, and shade
- Improve access to the beach and pursue a “cap” on the freeway
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and connectivity and address soundwalls and barriers that separate residents from schools, parks, and shopping
- Address housing quality; there are many poor-quality rental units (houses and apartments), but tenants are afraid to complain for fear of retribution